

News from Ed Markey

United States Congress

Massachusetts Seventh District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 21, 2000

CONTACT: Angelique Skoulas

(202) 225-2836

MARKEY SCORES VICTORY FOR HOMEBOUND MEDICARE PATIENTS

President Clinton signs bill containing Markey provision into law this afternoon

WASHINGTON, D.C. --

U.S. Representative Edward J. Markey (D-MA) today announced that a provision he had offered to clarify the definition of "homebound" in the Medicare statute has become law. President Clinton on Thursday, December 21, 2000 signed the Consolidated FY2001 Appropriations Bill that contained the unfinished FY2001 Appropriations bills, the "Medicare, Medicaid, and SCHIP Benefits Improvement and Protection Act of 2000," and other provisions. The bill passed both houses of Congress on December 15, 2000.

The Medicare, Medicaid and SCHIP Benefits Improvement and Protection Act of 2000 contained a number of provisions to provide additional relief to Medicare beneficiaries and providers who have suffered under the payment cuts contained in the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 (BBA). The BBA, which passed over Rep. Markey's objection, was intended to cut \$115 billion from Medicare over 5 years, but the bill actually cut more than double that amount.

Rep. Markey said, "I offered this amendment and raised the issue with negotiators because I found it shocking that under current law, Alzheimer's patients could not attend adult day care without losing their home health benefits. This was true even though we know that adult day care services are a complement to home health benefits, relieve caregiver burdens and delay nursing home placement - all at a minimal cost to the Medicare program. Even worse, current law fails to allow any beneficiaries including those with Alzheimer's who are confined to the home to attend religious services without losing their home health benefits."

Section 507 (B) of the legislation just signed into law by President Clinton reads: "Any absence of an individual from the home attributable to the need to receive health care treatment, including regular absences for the purpose of participating in therapeutic, psychosocial, or medical treatment in an adult daycare program that is licensed or certified by a State, or accredited, to furnish adult daycare services in the State shall not disqualify an individual from being considered to be 'confined to his home.' Any other absence of an individual from the home shall not so disqualify an individual if the absence is of infrequent or of relatively short duration. For the purposes of the previous sentence, any absence for the purpose of attending a religious service shall be deemed to be an absence of infrequent or short duration."

Markey said, "Today, we've won a victory for Medicare home health beneficiaries, Alzheimer's patients in particular, and their caregivers. I would like to thank Senator Jim Jeffords (R-VT) who worked to include this language in the Senate, the House and Senate leadership for including this provision in the

final bill, and the Alzheimer's Association and the National Council on the Aging for their passionate advocacy on the critical issue of homebound.

###